

**AESTHETIC STANCE IN READING POEMS: A PORTRAIT OF
EFL LEARNERS' READING COMPREHENSION IN ENGLISH
LANGUAGE TEACHING DEPARTMENT**

A THESIS

**Submitted to English Language Teaching Department, *Tarbiyah* and Teacher
Training Faculty of *Syekh Nurjati* State Islamic Institute Cirebon in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements of Undergraduate Degree**



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ABSTRACT

Ranita Verawati Habibah (14121310342) AESTHETIC STANCE IN READING POEMS: A PORTRAIT OF EFL LEARNERS' READING COMPREHENSION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING DEPARTMENT

This study was explored the issue on how EFL learners explore aesthetic stance in reading poems. The study was motivated by Rosenblatt (1983, p. 33), who says that text must be read and interpreted by the individual in which the reading will be influenced by the individual's experience and stance (as cited in Sanders, 2012). Meaning construction during the reading process of a literary text is important and can take place in the role of reader stance. It means that, the study of aesthetic stance is important role in develop students' language skills.

This study aims (1) to investigate how EFL learners approach the poem and (2) to clarify how EFL learners explore their stance in reading poems in an attempt to reach comprehension.

This study is qualitative research, exactly descriptive qualitative. The primary sources of data are conducted through interview in order to explore EFL learners' aesthetic stance in reading poems. The secondary sources of data are conducted through document analysis.

The results of study reveals that EFL learners tend to use different activities in each strategy. There are (1) in pre-reading phase, EFL learners activate their schemata when reading poems. The strategies that EFL learners used in this phase are specify a purpose for reading, take the steps, preview the text and predict the content of the text or section of the text, and (2) in while reading phase, EFL learners connect their background knowledge which tend to general view. Meanwhile, in after reading phase, the stance more explored when respondents make a sense with the text. They make a bigger connection than previous phase. It can be concluded that in after reading phase, their stance more explored by relating to what the connection did in pre-reading phase and while reading phase.

Keywords: *Aesthetic Stance, Reading poems, Reading Comprehension*



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

According to Grabe and Stoller (2013:3), reading is the ability to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret this information appropriately. In addition, McShane (2005:19) believe that reading opens many doors, such as for employment, training, higher education and lifelong learning. Rose (2005) has observed that “without the ability to communicate and learn effectively through reading and writing, individuals are severely disadvantaged for life” (as cited in Westwood (2008:2)). Reading becomes the crucial thing in our life.

Reading is ability to construct meaning of the text. The process of constructing meaning is called comprehension. According to Smith (2004:13), “comprehension relating aspect of the world around us, including what we read to the knowledge, intentions, and expectations we already have in our head.” So that, without comprehension, reading is not happened. Reader comes to text for different purposes. According to Grabe and Stoller (2001:187) “the purpose of reading involved of to get main ideas, to locate specific information, to synthesize information, for general information, and for pleasure.” Reading for pleasure can reflects stance of reader.

According to Galda and Liang (2003:269), “stance has to do with expectations for reading, with the way in which a reader approaches a text, and stance influences the act of reading before, during, and after a book is opened.” Stance determines the reader in makes meaning of the text. In reader response theory, stance divided into two kinds of stance. There are aesthetic stance and efferent stance. In aesthetic stance, the reader focused directly in his living experience toward the text. In efferent stance, the reader focused on the information or facts of the text.

There are some previous studies that focused on the reading area. First, focused on reading and gender, Arellano (2012), Bouchard (2005)). Second, focused on reading strategies (Sinem (2009), Pezhman (2012), Ahmadi and Abdullah (2013), Briewin M and Amin E.M (2013), Ardiyantika (2014), Hidayatu (2014)). Third, focused on reading habit (Iftanti (2012)). Fourth, focused on reader response (Nafisah (2014), Jerome (2012), Khatib (2011), Al-Bulushi (2011), Sanchez (2009)).

From these previous study, the area of reading that concerned of this study is about reader response. The study was motivated by Rosenblatt (1983, p. 33), who says that text must be read and interpreted by the individual in which the reading will be influenced by the individual's experience and stance (as cited in Sanders, 2012). Meaning construction during the reading process of a literary text is important and can take place in the role of reader stance. It means that, the study of aesthetic stance is important role in develop students' language skills.

Reading has many kind of genres. One of kind of the genre in literature is poem. Reading poems is different with reading newspapers in which reading poems is mythical and multi interpretative, as Meihuizen (2001) says that "every reader comes to a poem with different sensory perceptions and different personal background that create multiple interpretations." Grabe (2009, p. 14), says that reading is centrally a comprehending process. In reading poems, comprehension is built based on experience because literature as not information but experience.

There are some previous studies that relevant with this study. First, Nafisah (2014) who investigated student's interpretation in reading English text in the past by using reader-response approach. She found that personal experience can influence student in reading text, especially canonical text. Second, Jerome (2012) who investigate student's response though poetry writing. Third, Al-Bulushi (2011) who investigated the effectiveness of reader response theory that applied by Omani secondary school in reading short stories. He found that students who under the framework of reader



response theory is better in reading comprehension's test than students who used traditional method. Fourth, Khatib (2011) who investigated Iranian EFL students in reading short stories by using reader response approach. He found that by applying reader response approach has possibility influence toward student's motivation in reading short stories.

Based on findings from previous studies, it was felt that there is a need to used different genre to more explore reader response theory in learning activity. Furthermore, this study will focused on explore EFL learner's aesthetic stance in reading poem, as Rosenblatt (1978) argued that "the most effective way to read a literary work is to adopt an aesthetic stance" (As cited in Galda and Liang (2003:269)). So that, this position of this study is different with previous study in which this study took poem as the text to explore with aesthetic stance.

1.2 Focus of the Study

This study focuses on investigation of EFL learners's aesthetic stance in reading poem under the framework of reader response perspective. Aesthetic stance is kind of reading that focus on feelings and attitudes in reading a text. Therefore, this study aims to explore EFL learners in reading poems that focuses on adopting an aesthetic stance.

This study will be only specific discuss in how EFL learner reach comprehension in reading poem. Student will response the literary of text to comprehended the text. They will approach the text and they will explore their stance in reading poems in an attempt to reach comprehension. Since the previous study only focus on short story in Khatib (2011), with this research it would be filling a gap from the previous study.



1.3 Formulation of the Problem

The formulation problem of this study will be investigated based on what mentioned in the questions of research.

Questions of the Research:

1. How do EFL learners do approach the text?
2. How do the readers explore their stance in reading poems in an attempt to reach comprehension?

1.4 Aims of the Research

The purposes of the research:

1. To explore how EFL learners do approach the text.
2. To clarify how the readers exploration their stance in reading poems in an attempt to reach comprehension.

1.5 Significance of the Research

The significant of the research can be viewed from two different sides, they are theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this research is valuable finding for research in reading area. Practically, the result would be of some importance to teacher and student. For the teacher, they can use reader response approach in reading literature and can consider to use literary text, especially poem to develop student' skill in learning process. For the student, they can practice reading with more enjoyable by using aesthetic stance that related their personal experience in reading a text. Furthermore, the aesthetic experience also can help student to develop the imaginative capacity.



1.6 Previous Studies

This study also completed by some previous study that relevant with this research. The first previous studies by Nafisah (2014) who analyse student's interpretation toward canonical text. 15 respondents are taken in her research. Questionnaires, student's response and group discussions are used to collected the data. She found that personal experience influence student's understanding in reading text's world. Mostly, student difficult to understanding the canonical text politically and culturally. Beside that, they are inexperienced readers of literary texts.

The second previous study by Jerome (2012) who investigate student's response though poetry writing. He highlights students' proficiency and literary skills as some of the factors that need to be considered when using poetry writing as a way of responding to literature. In his research, he used the short story. He found that students' proficiency, literacy (e.g. reading and writing) and literary skills influence in the process of responding to literature.

The third previous study by Al-bulushi (2011) show the effectiveness of the using of the reader response theory in teaching short stories on Omani secondary school. The participans are divided into two groups, namely the control and experimental group. Experimental group which applied reader response theory. The result is that student who in experimental group better in reading comprehension' test than control group. Beside that, attitude both the control and experimental group show the differences. Control group show a negative attitude toward reading short stories. While, experimental group show more positive attitude. They are indicated enjoy in reading short stories.

The Fourth previous study by Khatib (2011) analysed Iranian EFL students in reading short story by applying the reader-response approach. His study taken 45 students from two classess. One class include control group which used traditional method, another one is experimental group which used



reader response approach. He found that possibility reader response approach influence student's motivation in reading literature, especially short stories.

However, the previous study only focus on short story and canonical text. While, this research would be filling a gap from the previous study in which focus on poem. Furthermore, this study will investigate EFL learners aesthetic stance in reading poem, as Rosenblatt (1978) argued that "the most effective way to read a literary work is to adopt an aesthetic stance" (As cited in Galda and Liang (2003:269)).

1.7 Theoretical Foundation

This study exploring EFL learner's aesthetic stance in reading poem. The three concern of this study were to examine how the student approach the poem, how the student identify the typology of the poem and clarify how the readers explore their stance in reading poems in an attempt to reach comprehension. This study was informed by reader response theories, aesthetic stance and reading poem.

1.7.1 Reader Response Theories

Reader response theory is emphasize the role of reader in reading process. It can be for a range of different purposes. Reader may respond to clarify their attitude, to express their emotional reactions, to explore difficulties in understanding, to verify their opinion with others, or to build a social relationship though sharing responses (Beach, 1993:6). Beach and Marshall (in Beach,1993:6) mention 6 kind of reader response strategies:

1. Engaging
2. Conceiving
3. Connecting
4. Explaining



5. Interpreting

6. Judging

Beach (1993:8) divides reader response theories into five categories, namely textual, experiential, psychological, social and cultural. From those five categories, Rosenblatt considered a theory in the experiential category. Rosenblatt (1983) believes that “meaning from the text is not created until the reader actually connects with the text” (as cited in Sander, 2012:1). It means that, meaning is created when the reader and the text come together. The reader and the text influence on one another to create an experience. As (Rosenblatt (2005) in Sanders (2012:2)) argues that “works must be experienced and meanings produced as readers relate to texts”.

There are some response process of the experiential response on the basis of Rosenblatt’s transactional theory (Purves and Beach; Beach and Marshall in Beach, (1993:61)):

- a. Engaging: becoming emotionally involved, empathizing or identifying with the text.
- b. Constructing: entering into and creating alternative worlds, conceptualizing characters, events, settings.
- c. Imaging: creating visual image.
- d. Connecting: relating one's autobiographical experience to the current text.
- e. Evaluating/reflecting: judging the quality of one's experience with a text.



1.7.2 Aesthetic Stance

Stance is a way the reader approach a text. Stance influence the act of reading before, during and after a text we read (Galda and Liang (2003:269)). According to Rosenblatt (1994:43), stance is the reader's focus of attention in the reading process, "a readiness to respond in a particular way". In reading process, surely every reader comes to text bring different things. Hedgcock and Ferris (2009:50), mention 5 term of reader that brings in reading process:

1. Purposes for reading (for survival, information/learning, or pleasure).
2. Background (the influences of family, school, and culture or subculture of origin).
3. Attitudes toward reading and literacy in general (which may be shaped both by purpose and background).
4. Prior knowledge (linguistic, content, and rhetorical) related to the information in the text.
5. Individual differences in personality, learning styles and strategies, reading strategies, and life experience.

Reader's purpose for reading will influence many things. It can influence how the text is read, what is attended to in the reading, and how the reader interprets what is read. Rosenblatt argues that "an important aspect of that relationship between text, readers' purposes, and the variety of readings that can and do take place is the role of reader stance" (Rosenblatt, 1978, 2004). So that, stance of the reader determined by the reader's purposes.



There are two stance that were developed by Rosenblatt (1978) when she was analysing the stances a reader may assume when reading a literary text. The first is efferent stance and the second is aesthetic stance. Efferent stance refer to reading that focused on on the information or facts of the text. Rosenblatt (2004:23) states that in efferent stance, “the reader’s attention is focused primarily on what will remain as the residue after the reading—the information to be acquired, the logical solution to a problem, the actions to be carried out.” While, aesthetic stance refer to reading that focused directly in his living experience toward the text. Rosenblatt (2004:24) explain that in aesthetic stance, “the reader’s attention is centered directly on what he is living though during his relationship with that particular text”. So that, when we reading a text by aesthetic stance, reader will be focuses on the sensations, images, feelings and thoughts evoked from the text.

Aesthetic experience can produce value for reader. As Rosenblatt (2004:24), says that reading in aesthetic stance “can be enjoyed in itself—and at the same have a social origin and social effect”. Aesthetic experience different with non-aesthetic experience. Acccording to Connel (2000:31), there are three features of aesthetic experience, namely:

1. An organic immersion in the reader’s prior beliefs and experiences
2. A connection to emotional drives
3. A stimulation of imagination

1.7.3 Reading Poem

Reading is the process of receiving and interpreting information from the text (Grabe, 2009:14). Comprehension occurs



when reader integrate what the information they get from the text and what they have known. Reading not only single process but have many combination of processes. As Grabe (2009:14) mention 10 processes in reading:

1. A rapid process
2. An efficient process
3. A comprehending process
4. An interactive process
5. A strategic process
6. A flexible process
7. A purposeful process
8. An evaluative process
9. A learning process
10. A linguistic process

In reading, surely need strategy to approach the text. It can make reader easy to get comprehension when reading a text. As Grabe and Stoller (2013:10) says that “strategies is still an important concept for reading abilities”. So that, strategy has important role for reader in reading activity. Grabe and Stoller (2013:10) mention 22 term of reading strategies:

1. Specifying a purpose for reading
2. Planning what to do/what steps to take
3. Previewing the text
4. Predicting the contents of the text or section of text



5. Checking predictions
6. Posing questions about the text
7. Finding answers to posed questions
8. Connecting text to background knowledge
9. Summarising information
10. Making inferences
11. Connecting one part of the text to another
12. Paying attention to text structure
13. Rereading
14. Guessing the meaning of a new word from context
15. Using discourse markers to see relationship
16. Checking comprehension
17. Identifying difficulties
18. Taking steps to repair faulty comprehension
19. Critiquing the author
20. Critiquing the text
21. Judging how well purposes for reading were met
22. Reflecting on what has been learned from the text

Reading process of reader will be different each other. It based on their background knowledge and the kind of text that will be read. So that, reading poem will be diferent with reading another text. This is because poem is multi interpretative and complicated.



As Meihuizen (2001) says that “every reader comes to a poem with different sensory perceptions and different personal background that create multiple interpretations”. There are major elements in understanding poetry (Adapted from Spack (1998a, pp. 223–225) in Hedgcock and Ferris (2009:269):

1. Consider the speaker in the poem.
2. Consider the subject of the poem (what the poem is about).
3. Consider the setting (if applicable).

The benefits of using literature with English language learners, therefore, generally involve four dimensions: affective, linguistic, cultural, and literary. In other words, literature can not only serve as a motivating medium that facilitates English language learners’ language learning, but also develop their cross-cultural awareness and nourish their literary appreciation (Lee, 2007:5).

1.7.4 Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is the process of making meaning from text. The goal, therefore, is to gain an overall understanding of what is described in the text rather than to obtain meaning from isolated words or sentences. In understanding read text information children develops mental models, or representations of meaning of the text ideas during the reading process. There are two classes of mental models: a text-based model, which is a mental representation of the propositions of the text and a situation model consisting of what the text is perceived to be about (Kintsch 1998; van Dijk and Kintsch 1983 as cited in Wooley, 2011: 15).

Reading comprehension (understanding, gaining meaning and interpreting the text) depends on a variety of reader-related, text-



related, and situational factors. Meaning is formed in the reader's head, that is, a person's prior knowledge affects the kinds of meanings constructed from the text information (Fukkink and de Glopper 1998; Lipson 1983 as cited in Wooley, 2011: 17).

To comprehend, a reader must have a wide range of capacities and abilities. These include cognitive capacities (e.g., attention, memory, critical analytic ability, inferencing, visualization ability), motivation (a purpose for reading, an interest in the content being read, self-efficacy as a reader), and various types of knowledge (vocabulary, domain and topic knowledge, linguistic and discourse knowledge, knowledge of specific comprehension strategies). Of course, the specific cognitive, motivational, and linguistic capacities and the knowledge base called on in any act of reading comprehension depend on the texts in use and the specific activity in which one is engaged.

The features of text have a large effect on comprehension. Comprehension does not occur by simply extracting meaning from text. During reading, the reader constructs different representations of the text that are important for comprehension. Reading does not occur in a vacuum. It is done for a purpose, to achieve some end. Activity refers to this dimension of reading. A reading activity involves one or more purposes, some operations to process the text at hand, and the consequences of performing the activity. During reading, the reader processes the text with regard to the purpose. Processing the text involves, beyond decoding, higher-level linguistic and semantic processing and monitoring. Each process is more or less important in different types of reading, including skimming (getting only the gist of text) and studying (reading text with the intent of retaining the information for a period of time).



According to Pearson (1984) as cited in Serafini (2012:190), stated that readers who comprehend:

1. are active processors of text
2. connect texts to their experiences and prior knowledge
3. set expectations or goals for their reading
4. attend to the elements and structures of literature
5. monitor their understanding
6. ask questions of the text as they read
7. preview or skim texts before reading
8. attend to vocabulary
9. are able to articulate and negotiate meaning
10. construct meaning as they read through texts
11. read selectively, choosing texts that serve their goals and purposes

So that, from cognitive or psycholinguistic perspective, comprehension is view as a process of constructing meaning in transaction with texts. The process of comprehension begins before we start to 'read' and continues even after the reading is finished. Good readers use pre-reading strategies like previewing the text and use post-reading strategies like summarizing in addition to the many strategies they use to make meaning during reading itself. By dividing instruction into pre-reading, during reading and post-reading, reader will improve their comprehension.



1.8 Research Methodology

1.8.1 Research Setting

The research place will be conducted in IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon during five month (on 1 April 2016 – 31 July 2016) toward the students who from English Education Department. In this college, student used English as their foreign language. So that, this place is appropriate to this study because as the purpose of this research that concern toward EFL learners.

1.8.2 Source of Data

To answer the research question, researcher will select students by using the purposeful sampling technique. As Ary, at al (2006:421) states that “qualitative studies more typically use nonrandom or purposive selection techniques based on particular criteria”. The researcher will identify key informants persons who have some specific knowledge about the topic being investigated (Lodico et.al 2006:140). Therefore, researcher will take respondent from English Education Department students exactly 8th semester. This is because students in seventh semester were having experience in reading subject during fourth semester. Beside that the resource will be selected students who have experiences in reading a poem. In other hand, two students will be select from eight semester to participate in the study. So that, there will be 2 participants of EFL learners investigated. It would represent EFL learners in English Education Departmen of IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon.

1.9 Research Design

In order to explore student's stance in reading poem, researcher believe qualitative research is appropriate to used. The method of this research uses qualitative research exactly descriptive qualitative. As Dawson



(2009:23) argues that “qualitative research explores attitudes, behaviour and experiences through such method as interviews”. In addition, Ary, et al (2010:421) stated that “qualitative inquirers seek to interpret human actions, institutions, events, customs, and the like, and in so doing they construct a “reading,” or portrayal, of what is being studied”.

1.10 Research System

1.10.1 Steps of the Research

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2009:425-426), there are several steps involved in qualitative research:

1. Identification of phenomenon to be studied.

Researcher must identify the particular phenomenon based on experience, observation in the research settings, and readings on the topic. In this step, researcher try to identification the research that focus on exploring EFL learners’ aesthetic stance in reading poem.

2. Identification of the participants in the study.

The participants in the study constitute the sample of individuals who will be observed (interviewer). In other word, it called the subject of the study.

3. Data collection.

The collection of data in a qualitative research study is ongoing. The researcher is continually observing people, events, and occurrences, often supplementing his or her observations with in-depth interviews of selected participants and the examination of various documents and records relevant to the phenomenon of interest.

4. Data analysis.

Analyzing the data in a qualitative study essentially involves analyzing and synthesizing the information the



researcher obtains from various sources (e.g., observations, interviews, documents) into a coherent description of what he or she has observed or otherwise discovered.

5. Interpretations and conclusions.

In qualitative research, interpretations are made continuously throughout the course of a study. Whereas quantitative researchers usually leave the drawing of conclusions to the very end of their research, qualitative researchers tend to formulate their interpretations as they go along.

1.10.2 Techniques of Collecting Data

This research used qualitative research which is used to serve lived experience directly. This study will investigate aesthetic stance in reading poems of EFL learners through three technique, namely observation, interview, and document analysis.

1.10.2.1 Observation

This research used observation as one of techniques of qualitative research. As stated Lodico, et. al (2010: 104) that qualitative research data by using observation are often collected through some combination of field notes and audio or visual recording. In this study, the researcher observed EFL learner's aesthetic stance in reading poems at the eight semester of *IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon*.

1.10.2.2 Interview

As Ary, et al (2010 : 438) stated that “the interview is one of the most widely used and basic methods for obtaining qualitative data”. The interview would show how the students approach the text and show how the students explore their stance in reading poems to reach their comprehension. The purpose of interviewing people is to



find out what is on their minds—what they think or how they feel about something (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2009:446). In addition, Ary, et al (2010:438) stated that “Interviews are used to gather data from people about opinions, beliefs, and feelings about situations in their own words”. This study will use semi-structure interview to get data.

The text that will be used in this study is poem. The poems that will be used in this research is poems by Jallaludin Rumi. According to Beach and Marshall in Beach (1993:61), appreciation of the literary text applies seven reader response strategies; they are engaging, conceiving, connecting, explaining, interpreting and judging. So, the questions are made based on the above statement. The question will be about how the student approaches the text. It should be refer to twenty two steps of strategy of reading for reader to address a problem or a specific goal while reading (Grabe and Stoller, 2013:10). So, the questions are made based on the above statement and the researcher will provide questions in the interview which related to the aims of the research.

1.10.2.3 Document analysis

As Grabe (2002:166) stated that document analysis is collections of sets of documents that are relevants to the research questions (students" exercise, worksheets, writing assignments projects, students records). In this research, it displays the documentation of student record as study document.

1.10.3 Instrument of Collecting Data

The instrument of the research is researcher herself. According to Moleong (2008:9), in the qualitative research the intruments of the study is the researcher herself or with other people as a tool to collecting data and concern with the interview or study of document because only the researcher who can take account with



respondents or the other objects and also understand the fact that happen in the field. In this study, researcher as the instrument of the research collected the data though observation, interview and study of document.

1.11 Technique of Analysis Data

In the process analysis of the data the researcher will explore the data and try to answer the research question. The data would be analyze based on the result from interview. Data analysis will be following what Lodico et.al (2006:301) say in the way how to analyze the data. The step will be conducted as follows:

1. Preparing and organizing the data

The researcher will prepare and organize the data collected from interview. Recorded data from interview will be fully transcriptions.

2. Reviewing and exploring the data

The researcher review and explore by reading and looking through the data that collected. Also, will make sure whether enough data have been collected.

3. Coding data into categories

The researcher continually read, reread, and reexamine all of the data to make sure that the data not missed something or coded them in a way that is inappropriate to the experiences of the participants.

4. Contructing description of people, places, and activities

Once the data have been coded, the researcher writes detailed descriptions of the people, places, and events in the study.

5. Reporting and interpreting data

The researcher will interpret the report the data findings as a conclusion in the end of this qualitative research.



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